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ABSTRACT

Three articles on fostering communicative competence in the English as a second language classroom are presented. In "How to Foster Communicative Competence," Sue Khyat examines the sociocultural aspects of communicating. A contribution from the Language Teaching Branch of the Australian Department of Education entitled "Integrating the Skills of Communication: The Beginnings of Communicative Competence" takes a fresh look at some of the principles underlying the teaching of English as a second language and suggests a set of strategies designed to maximize practice with the language of a reading core. Two techniques by which students may be stimulated to express themselves are proposed in "Two Forms of Stimulus to Self-Expression: The Use of Action Pictures and the Excursion" by E. A. Liew. (JB)

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Vol. 2 No. 3 February, 1977

TEFL/TESL NEWSLETTER

FOR THE INTERCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS ON THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN AUSTRALIA

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CONTENTS

		Page
Editorial:		
Contributions:		
Sue Khyat, Eastbridge Hostel, Victoria	How to Foster Communicative Competence	1
Language Teaching Branch, Department of Education, Canberra	Integrating the Skills of Communication: the Beginnings of Communicative Competence	15
Mrs E.A. Liew, Accelerated English Course, Hobart	Two Forms of Stimulus to Self-Expression: the Use of Action Pictures and the Excursion	39

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EDITORIAL

Contributors have responded generously to our request for articles on the theme "How to Foster Communicative Competence". In this number, Sue Khyat's contribution examines the sociocultural aspects of communicating, while a contribution from the Language Teaching Branch takes a fresh look at some of the principles underlying the teaching of English as a second language and suggests a set of strategies designed to maximise practice with the language of a reading core.

Mrs Liew's article then proposes two techniques by which students may be stimulated to express themselves.

Our next number, Vol. 2 No. 4, will resume the theme of this issue, the important question of how to induce something approaching language mastery in our learners.

Contributions are now invited for Vol. 3 No. 1, the theme of which will be "Reading and its Role in TESL/TEFL".

The attention of readers is drawn to the contents of our last issue (Vol. 2, No. 2, October 1976) which consisted of material submitted by the Migrant Education Branch, Melbourne, for the teaching of Priority (or "Survival") English.

Readers are invited to forward their views on this material. Even the briefest of comments will be appreciated. It is hoped, in this way, to secure a wide range of comment, both on the materials offered and on the whole question of the teaching of Priority English, for possible inclusion in a future issue of the Newsletter.

HOW TO FOSTER COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

* Sue Khyat

"Migrant communication poses an important communication problem for Australia."

"The first insight . . . is an emphasis on the necessity to view language problems as a specific instance of a much wider class of phenomena."

"The solution of the migrant question certainly does not hinge on matters of linguistic competence alone."

" . . . the teaching of languages - either of English or of the migrant languages - cannot serve as an adequate measure, unless it is based on policies which aim at the concurrent removal of differential competence in the socio-economic rules of behaviour. In other words, education to multi-lingualism must be accompanied by education to multi-culturalism - both within the migrant and the Australian sections of the community. I wish to go even further and suggest that languages, either English or the migrant languages, should be taught in addition to the teaching of migrant and Australian socio-economic behaviour, not vice-versa. The world would be much better off if instead of millions of young people who learn a bit of grammar and vocabulary of a foreign language, there were thousands who would be competent in interpreting culturally different behaviour. In other words, the often used phrase, the 'teaching of migrant languages and cultures' should be taken literally, and with the emphasis on 'cultures'." (1)

The term "communicative competence" comes from the developing study of Sociolinguistics. In its proper context it is defined as the totality of rules that concern communication. As the field is very new there is still more unknown than known about these rules but the discipline rests on principles which have direct relevance to the teaching of English. These principles are:

- Language is a dynamic system, changing all the time. It cannot be isolated from society (hence the term "Sociolinguistics").

- Language is communication but communication embraces much more than language. A substantial part of communication is non-verbal.

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- Competence in communication involves knowing how to apply all the rules appropriate to any given situation. Grammatical competence, although the core of communication, is by no means the totality of communication.

- The non-grammatical rules of communicative competence decide what will be communicated, to whom, when and why. Sociolinguists consider such things as:

    - the speech act, its setting and participants
    - when to speak and when not to speak
    - what to say in any given situation as well as how to say it
    - how people arrange themselves in social situations and speech networks
    - forms of address, indications of status of participants
    - the whole range of non-verbal communication including such things as gesture and much that would normally be considered in the category of etiquette.

Some sociolinguists even say that a knowledge of communicative and social rules is more important than a knowledge of grammatical rules.

How then is all this relevant to the teaching of English and how do we "foster" communicative competence?

The search for answers to these questions should not merely degenerate to debates about the relative worth of existing English language courses measured one against the other. All present courses aim at teaching the student competence on the basis of grammar/vocabulary/pronunciation but communicative competence is more than that. We have to look far beyond the classroom to revising overall policies and attitudes, if the discussion of communicative competence is to have real meaning and relevance. This will be the primary concern of this paper.

First of all the total migrant scene must be considered, not just as background but as a real part of what goes on in the classroom.

English language courses organised and funded either directly or indirectly by the Commonwealth Government are for MIGRANTS, (with the exception of the courses for overseas students). Tourists and others are by definition excluded, especially in respect of the full-time courses. Therefore it should never be forgotten that the students are people who have taken the enormous step of leaving (or in some cases, being forced to leave) their homelands. Adult students' views of the world have already been more or less fixed by everything that formed them prior to their coming to Australia, to various extents, even if this is not always obvious to the average Australian, in particular, the Australian teacher. In other words there will be a collision of cultures resulting for the migrant anyway in cultural shock. This is also the source of migrants' problems with their children who will most certainly assimilate into the Australian way of life to a far greater extent than the parents.

We should also be fully aware of what actually happens to migrants in Australia, that is, how they cope, or fail to cope, in terms of their own expectations and in terms of "integrating" into Australian society according to officially defined policy. Many first generation migrants (especially recent migrants) have great difficulty in coping in economic, social and other spheres or else fail to cope at all. Very often these people are also the migrants without English. Problems arise in abundance and frequently these problems can be traced to communication breakdown even where the migrant may have basic grammatical competence in English. For example, migrant parents are notorious for avoiding parent/teacher meetings at schools even when they understand the invitation and there are no factors making their attendance impossible. The reason is not that the parents are uninterested in their children's progress but more likely their lack of knowledge of how to perform in such a situation and more importantly WHAT to say as well as HOW to say it in grammatically well-formed sentences.

In many ways migrants are cut off from the mainstream of Australian society and effectively prevented from contributing to it, not only by their lack of grammatical competence in English but also by their lack of competence on all those levels of communication that sociolinguists are now directing attention to.

Secondly, there can be no real fostering of communicative competence at the classroom level towards remedying the above situation unless there are changes at higher levels. These are:

1 The official departmental level.

2 The area of selection and training of teachers.

3 The organisation of courses and the preparation of materials.

1 The Official Departmental Level

Government departments, both Commonwealth and State, control the adult migrant education program to a degree unknown in other areas of education. Course materials and programs and certainly the guiding philosophy are largely supplied from Canberra with the details of the operation of the programs and the employment of teachers entrusted to special branches of the State Education Departments, such branches being totally outside the general educational operations of those departments. In the past only one course was used or considered desirable to use, which is still the situation except for some minor experimentation at the local level. In this paper I do not wish to dwell on the rights and wrongs, advantages and disadvantages of this centralised system but rather to point to changes of attitudes within the system that must take place before the theoretical work in communicative competence can have any practical effects in language teaching.

To "foster communicative competence" the first prerequisite is that the whole migrant education program be organised toward that end, so that the grammar/vocabulary/pronunciation orientation is simply the core rather than the totality of operations. Specifically, there must be full official recognition that:

- communicative competence involves far more than the traditional approach. In particular, migrant English teaching must be firmly planted in its proper context, that is, the total migrant scene.

- English is not an independent school-type subject isolated from everything else. Therefore it is totally invalid for it to be presented as such and for teachers to be instructed to teach only English.

- Language problems cover far more than problems with grammar/vocabulary/pronunciation and such problems must be faced in the classroom. Because of the inter-relation between language and society, language problems will involve socio-economic considerations. To say that

teachers should consider these areas is in no way to usurp the responsibilities of professional workers in employment, medical and welfare areas generally. Migrants should always be referred to the appropriate people for specific, specialised information and help. However, problems with the non-grammatical rules of communication lie between the grammar/vocabulary/pronunciation area and the area where other professional help is required and unless we restrict courses to the first area, teachers should be dealing with such problems. If a restriction were to apply then it would of course be nonsense to talk about "fostering communicative competence" within the classroom scene.

2 The Area of Selection and Training of Teachers

Long before the term "communicative competence" had been coined, training courses for teachers did make some contributions to the notion that learning English for a migrant was more than just grammar/vocabulary/pronunciation. It was often said that the program was not just teaching a language but a culture, and teachers were then (and now) told that "Australianisation" was also a part of what they should be doing, through "second hour" activities of two-hour continuation classes. Some guidelines were given to teachers as to what Australianisation was all about but nearly always this was on the level of songs, sport, cooking, festivals and interests typically Australian (such as Aussie rules football and the quaint scene of the Australian pub). There was little or no incentive for teachers to learn about their students in anything more than the foreign equivalents of the Australianisation idea. There was no recognition that Australianisation at its worst might be interpreted by migrants as extremely patronising or that migrants might inwardly resent the unspoken and probably unconscious inference of the superiority of Australian culture. Hardly education to multi-culturalism, although there is certainly a place in migrant education for these activities.

Communicative competence is not Australianisation, nor is it solely the teaching of culture (whichever interpretation is put on that multi-purpose word). As J.V. Neustupny points out:

> "Whenever the vague cliché "migrant languages and cultures" is used, many members of the public, linguists, anthropologists and sociologists included do not seem to realise that 'society and culture' on the one hand, and 'language' in the traditional sense of grammar/

vocabulary/pronunciation on the other, are not the only aspects of the issue. Between these two areas there is a vast area of non-grammatical rules of communication, rules which decide what will be communicated, to whom, when and where, and how. These rules are, of course, a part of our culture, but a part which possesses considerable autonomy, and the study of which has been neglected in the social sciences throughout their modern period of development." (2)

Training courses must therefore embody the concept of communicative competence as something fundamentally different from "Australianisation", which is much too one-sided. However I emphasise that no understanding of the concept of communicative competence is possible while certain attitudes persist, therefore teacher training courses must deal with the following as prerequisites to such an understanding:

a) Teachers should be made thoroughly aware of the migrant scene in an in-depth way. They should be encouraged to be continually sensitive and sympathetic to migrant problems. Teachers should also be encouraged to examine their own attitudes (and perhaps prejudices) towards migrants. Ideally, there should be some screening of teachers so that Australians unable to appreciate the enormity of what it is to emigrate and who show no desire to learn, should not be employed. Even with bilingual, well travelled teachers discriminatory attitudes can show up because:

   - the circumstances of the second language learning and the educational background are completely different in most cases from the migrant student

   - the extensive overseas experiences are usually not comparable with the migrants' experiences in Australia.

b) It should be stressed that migrants are not potentially the same as the average Australian once they learn English. A striking example of this for me was at a recent meeting at Eastbridge Hostel concerning the welfare of the recently arrived Indo-Chinese group (Cambodians, Laotians and Vietnamese). When an officer of one of the government departments involved urged the new arrivals to concentrate on "assimilating", a young Vietnamese man spoke up saying that he had been in Australia for ten years, had tried very hard to be an Australian as Australians are, but that it was

impossible. Underneath all, he said, he was Vietnamese and even if he himself managed to change that, Australians would never accept him as an Australian like themselves. Thus, even when migrants become grammatically competent, like that eloquent Vietnamese, they are still in most cases very different. Teachers must accept that and allow for differences even though those very differences may appear as problems for the teacher. An example would be the typical Turkish male student displaying aggressive behaviour with a female teacher resulting in a classroom upset. This is clearly traceable to cultural factors and is not invalidated by the observation that some Turkish men may not behave like that in class. It's a difficult situation but it helps if the teacher knows the reason and can take a broad view.

c) Differences however do not imply the inferiority of the migrant student. Few teachers would admit to holding such views but they should be encouraged to realise that this may be the very interpretation of some of the things they say and do, for example:

- referring to students by such terms as the "babies", "dumb dumbs", "deadwood", "heavies" among others, always indicating those students slower to learn. When questioned the teachers usually say that the terms are not meant in any derogatory way and continue to use them.

- seeming to be totally unaware of the pitfalls of talking about "intelligence". All too often I've heard teachers conclude that a student is "not very intelligent" when he learns at a slower rate than others or else fails to learn at all. Once a teacher has made such a conclusion his further efforts to help the student can only be half-hearted as he no longer expects success. The ability to learn grammatical English and to be competent in communication on the various levels in a new society may indeed be proved to correlate with "intelligence" at some stage in the future (although I would suggest that a correlation with formal education of the migrant may be more likely). The question however is best left to trained researchers who will define clearly what they mean by "intelligence" and how they intend to measure it over the barrier of language. It would be far more helpful for

teachers to concentrate on helping the student by any means which appear to work (in many cases this may mean bilingual teaching) while being sensitive to picking up specific factors that are negating the value of the teacher's work, eg the migrant may be over-tired, have financial, family or other problems; there may be medical considerations or any of a whole range of other socio-economic factors. One point I would also like to make is that sensitivity to, and interest in, migrant problems affecting performance in the classroom should not lead the teacher to unwelcome interference, eg suggesting the migrant work shorter hours so that he is less tired in class. Such attitudes show all too clearly that teachers making these suggestions from their own comfortable niches are totally out of touch with the reality of the necessities of life for the migrant. The wonder is that the migrant turns up at all for classes under those working conditions and it is no secret that a substantial number, if not a majority of all non-English speaking migrants have little or no contact with the English language programs. For the people who do manage to get to classes, there is little incentive to stay if teachers give the impression of censure rather than commendation for the effort already made.

- discussing a student with other teachers in front of the student as if he were not present, assuming that because he understands little or no English nothing will be communicated to him. The content of the conversation will probably not be communicated but the teachers' attitudes certainly will be, as these are not dependent on verbal messages. In fact, many teachers who find problems in handling students often do not realise that the source may be their own attitudes towards those students which are easily transmitted even without a common language.

- begrudging the student the teaching service at all when the student is a problem in one way or another, especially on full-time courses. Comments usually run along the lines of "I'm a taxpayer and I don't think taxpayers' money should be wasted on him." The points missed are:

- migrants are taxpayers too and usually without political representation, that is, no vote. (A migrant must speak basic English before being eligible for citizenship.)

- the service exists as a right and not a privilege to be bestowed on migrants who will be good students. (If this statement is wrong then let the government and/or the government departments involved, contradict it.)

d) Teachers must approach their migrant students with the belief that all can learn English except in rare cases where some serious factor, for example, a speech defect, may interfere. This does not mean that all students will learn at the same rate. At one extreme, some will learn with or without the teacher's help, extraordinarily quickly, and at the other, some will need a vast amount of help to learn a little. The ability to speak English (and hopefully to attain communicative competence in our society) is not however for migrants an academic luxury for students with talent (as may have been the case with some teachers learning a second language), but an absolute prerequisite to full membership of Australian society. Migrant teaching can be rewarding in many ways but teachers should not expect an easy occupation, far removed from the traumas of normal schools. It is those who do who are reluctant to face the problems and thereby contribute little or nothing to building up communicative competence in their students.

3 The Organisation of Courses and the Preparation of Materials

There is no existing course of instruction which aims at teaching communicative competence as it is defined in Sociolinguistics. A single course will never be possible given the range of possible communicative situations at any level of society, let alone for a whole society. However there is much that could be done towards "fostering communicative competence".

Adequately trained teachers who are aware of the concept could investigate at the grass roots level to find out which communication acts of their

migrant students are marked as inadequate by Australians and vice versa. This would involve much out-of-the-classroom activity to discover the areas where communication breaks down, for example, in the work field, social scene, areas of contact with organisations such as the school, church, government departments and so on. Guidelines could be:

- What language does the migrant need in particular speech events?
- How does the status of the participants influence communication and the language used?
- What do the various participants expect from each other?
- What non-verbal behaviour influences communication?
- What differences show up between the particular event in Australia and its Italian, Spanish, Turkish, Yugoslav or Cambodian equivalent (if there is one)?

Such information in itself would certainly cause teachers to revise their lessons. However, again I emphasise that the process requires teachers with open, inquiring minds; teachers prepared to look for culturally different behaviour which can lead to communication breakdown, without any suggestion of personal value judgements or denunciations by the teacher as all too frequently happens.

Better communication among teachers themselves, especially via regular, organised meetings, or workshops, would lead to an exchange of ideas, information and measures adopted to correct instances of specific communication breakdown. New courses for classroom use might even result.

Some interested teachers are already thinking along these lines, either because of an intuitive realisation of the students' needs or because of their contact with academic work in Sociolinguistics. However, these sporadic contributions need to be co-ordinated and supported by the employing authorities to be effective and widespread.

Effective oral communication needs a solid grammar/vocabulary/pronunciation foundation but the question of whether the Government-sponsored Situational English course is the most efficient and economical way to do it needs investigation. The method certainly has advantages and has mostly been used to counter the problem of many different language speakers in the same class with monolingual English-speaking teachers. This was an easy and practical

solution from an administrative point of view in the past, but from various quarters now, there are rising pressures for bilingual teaching as the quickest, most effective way for migrants to learn English. Whatever the long-term decisions on this, I would suggest that as Situational English is widely used and the books available free to the migrant student, there are ways in which it could be made more relevant to the migrants' needs.

Specifically, far more aids should be prepared centrally by the Language Teaching Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Education. For example, the Language Picture Series No 2 is good as far as it goes but much more could be done along the same lines. Similar series could be prepared for each group of occupations, for example, one for the metal trades, one for the building trades, one for electrical trades, one for clerical and office occupations and so on. This would mean that teachers would have at hand a complete change of content and vocabulary appropriate to the students he has and the grammatical structures from Situational English that he is teaching. Individual teachers cannot be expected to prepare such materials because of:

- the time factor involved and
- the fact that most teachers have a general humanities educational background which ensures that in most cases they lack the necessary knowledge, especially of technological processes, tools used, types of communication required in the industrial scene where most migrants find work. Sadly, the two cultures of C.P. Snow are very much in evidence when the language teacher meets the migrant student.

Furthermore, accompanying tapes of Situational English should be made available in cassette form to migrants, either for purchase or loan. Bilingual materials and courses in use at overseas posts should be released for widespread use in Australia, and the Department should prepare more of them.

There is a need for a complete restructuring of the organisation of classes. Continuation (mostly night) classes are inefficient even in the traditional methods. Situational English is a structural course (each part building on what has gone before) yet students are encouraged to start at any time. Students with little or no English who find themselves in classes where almost nothing is comprehensible may quickly lose interest or worse, develop a negative image of their own abilities. Regularly attending students tire

of the same lesson repeated time after time as newcomers arrive unpredictably and the teacher tries to accommodate them. There must be a perceivable beginning and end of the course for every student and in the night class situation, using a grammatically structured course I see no way out except to hold students with no English at all until the cycle recommences. One answer to this problem has been to put such students into Survival (Priority) type classes where they can learn language necessary for immediate survival before entering the structured lessons. The problem here is that by definition these classes are not structural, because a student can enter them at any time at all without disadvantage (in theory) to himself or the other students, but in practice, getting the meaning of the language across to the students merely by signs and demonstrations is even more difficult than in the Situational English type lesson. The teacher might delude himself that there are no problems, but learning the meaning of the language as distinct from the production of it is far more difficult than teachers generally realise. Nevertheless, these classes are attempts at teaching communicative competence in prefabricated situations (for example, buying a train ticket, shopping and so on). They would really be effective with multi-lingual teachers or at the very least multi-lingual written versions explaining the situation and its accompanying language.

Many migrants see full-time English courses as the solution to their language problems. Of course that view is unrealistic. In a ten-week course even a gifted student who starts with no English will still need more to attain even grammatical competence, let alone full communicative competence. However there is much wrong with existing full-time courses apart from their obvious brevity.

If the Government is really serious about its English Language program then it must recognise immediately that:

- full-time subsidised instruction is the best way for migrants to learn English because only in this way are migrants freed from the socio-economic factors which otherwise impede their learning.

- full-time subsidised English should be available to all migrants. To give it to some and not to others is a blatant form of discrimination, usually against migrants who will find the most difficulty in learning through other channels.

- present allowances are hopelessly inadequate and should be increased without delay.

- individual students should be grouped according to their needs and abilities and courses should be designed to meet those needs and abilities. Numbers of students in courses should be flexible and not tied to twenty students as the ideal number. For some types of students the group should be no more than four or five.

Lack of recognition and implementation of these principles allows wrongs to be perpetuated. There are migrants who have been forced out of, or encouraged to leave full-time courses on the grounds that the course is not suitable for them (that is, they are too slow or too stupid to justify government money being spent on them). Notwithstanding the fact that the migrant may not be able to recommence work earlier than planned, this is discrimination at its worst. The solution is not to eliminate the slower students (for the teachers' convenience) but to change the courses or design new ones to accommodate them. Offering the migrant unsubsidised, part-time continuation classes, or semi-accelerated courses is no solution for the migrant who for precisely the reason of his inability to participate in those types of courses previously, placed all his hopes in the full-time course. Even if only one subsidised course continues to be available to each migrant, the individual should be able to choose whether he wants a very basic, elementary course now or a more advanced course later, after all the options have been placed before him. Either course though would be subsidised on a full-time basis so that he can stop work to attend and concentrate on it. How many migrants too have passed through full-time courses, gaining little or nothing from them because of inability to keep up with the work? Much could be achieved in existing courses with provision of extra teachers per course to allow for more group work, although basically there are many migrants who need separate and different courses if they are to learn.

The additional, important problem is that obviously, full-time courses are too short. They should either be extended, or students permitted more than one course, according to their need. It is significant that, in comparison, Israel gives its immigrants five and six months courses in Hebrew, and Sweden runs courses for its Turkish guest workers to teach them literacy in Turkish as a pre-condition to learning Swedish.

Communicative competence could never be totally attained as a result of English language classes only. The important thing is that the authorities in this country recognise the difference between language competence and communicative competence, and consequently ensure that the theoretical insights have practical effects in the English language program for migrants. One very important aspect of communicative competence, the establishment of networks, has not been discussed in this article. All too often, after a language course, the migrant is advised to practise his English in order to maintain what he has learnt, without recognition that for many migrants this is extremely difficult, if not impossible, given their socio-economic situations. This is a serious problem, at the heart of the implementation of the "integration" concept, which needs to be looked at systematically to ensure that good work done in language classes by both teachers and students is not, in fact, negated later.

Communicative competence can be "fostered" within the migrant education program, but unless impetus comes from the controlling authorities there will be no widespread results at the classroom level. If the language and communication problems of migrants are not looked at rigorously and as related to their socio-economic conditions, it is the whole of Australia that will eventually suffer the consequences.

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2 Ibid, p 3.

INTEGRATING THE SKILLS OF COMMUNICATION: THE BEGINNINGS OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Language Teaching Branch, Department of Education, Canberra

Integration of Skills: the Key Factor in Communicative Competence

Much scholarly debate has gone on concerning the nature of communicative competence. The purpose of this article is not so much to contribute to that debate as to take a rule-of-thumb definition and examine ways in which the teacher can adapt his approach, method and techniques for the attainment of language mastery in the classroom.

The "competence" component of this expression refers to the accuracy of a speaker's model of what passes for normal in the language; while the "communication" component, which could scarcely exist if competence did not pre-exist, pre-supposes a high degree of proficiency in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

For practical purposes a definition of communicative competence might well be as follows:

- the ability to receive and decode what is heard or read, together with
- the ability to encode and transmit what the speaker wishes to say or to write; and
- the ability to participate actively and appropriately in the alternating "sending" and "receiving" that constitutes the typical oral communication context.

The key factor in communicative competence is clearly the successful integration of the skills of communication.

The Neglect of Skills Integration

In the heyday of audiolingualism, in the 1960's, a good many enthusiastic teachers were convinced that a practical application of the habit theory had

reduced the processes of teaching and learning other languages to a simple, almost "scientific" formula (1971 Jakobovits 34). Commercial interests fostered this notion, perhaps quite inadvertently, with their promotion of the language laboratory and other electronic aids to the "conditioning" process. Pattern practice, with or without a language laboratory, was perhaps the principal practical embodiment of the habit theory, and many teachers tended to make this the be-all and end-all of their teaching. There is a danger that some of this mystique lingers on.

Question the typical teacher and he or she will no doubt readily agree that the ultimate aim is to give the student the ability to use his second language as a tool of communication. Many writers have stressed the need for teaching in "real" communication situations (1971 Ornstein 148, 1971 Chastain 90, 1971 Smith 33, 1970 Spolsky 38) yet some of us bring our students to a high pitch of skill and efficiency in the manipulation of isolated speech patterns and neglect to provide regular practice in the give-and-take of true communication contexts.

Where there is an excessive or an exclusive dedication to the practising of patterns at the expense of other parts of the teaching/learning process, the real ability to communicate will be slow to make its appearance: for facility in manipulating the structural forms of a language by no means guarantees either long-term retention of language items or the ability to cope with real communication situations. (1969 Chastain 114, 1968 Jakobovits 89, 1971 Jakobovits 38, 1970 Lester 53, 1971 Lipson 232.)

To place such faith in pattern repetition is understandable, for where can a teacher look for guidance to fill the vacuum of contextualised practice? Little enlightenment on this score is to be found in teachers manuals or course-books generally, while the literature has tended to run away from the problem, with quite a lot written about "new" directions such as "individualised instruction" - which has sometimes been taken to mean no more than that individual needs are to be met by individual programs of pattern practice! In some parts of the literature there has been what seems to amount to a wholesale rejection of audiolingualism, without any suggestion as to what philosophy might replace it. Small wonder that some teachers find their students' lack of success rather bewildering, and wonder what direction they should take.

In addition, because many people saw one of the features of audiolingualism as being the need to develop mastery of each point before the learner moves forward (1971 Bosco and Di Petro 31-52) a common (but by no means essential) organisational strategy of audiolingual texts has been the additive linear progression. This device, which is by no means exclusive to audiolingual texts, has no doubt been a major contributory factor to the neglect of contextualised practice, in two distinct ways: it takes the language benevolently apart for the assistance of the learner, and something essential is therefore lacking if the learner is not given regular practice in putting it together again; secondly, the additive linear progression so daunts teachers and students alike (when they see a course before them that appears to go on forever, like the brook) that teachers understandably succumb to the temptation to rush headlong from one sequence of presenting and drilling a pattern to the next.

Perhaps the most extreme reaction against the additive linear progression has been that of Jakobovits, who says that the learner should be "exposed to the full range of linguistic data right from the beginning" (1971 Jakobovits 25) and there is a degree of support today for a Gestaltist or a "holistic" approach to the presentation of the language.

Don't Throw out the Baby with the Bathwater!

On the other hand, because of the reservations many teachers feel about audiolingualism in practice, there is a need to sound a warning. Educational change tends to indulge in a full swing of the pendulum, with the result that teachers later discover that, along with what was faulty, they have also discarded something of enduring value.

We ought to bear in mind, in this connection, that the often quoted "five slogans of audiolingualism" expounded as late as 1961 by William Moulton (1961 Moulton) did in fact represent a considerable advance from the literary-based grammar-translation approach, which had been the common factor in much foreign-language teaching right up into the 1950's.

Moulton said (and 1, 3 and 4 in particular give clear evidence of the nature of the reaction against grammar-translation):

"1 Language is speech, not writing.

2 A language is a set of habits.

3 Teach the language, not about the language.

4 A language is what its native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say.

5 Languages are different."

For all the attention that slogan number 2 has attracted, we must admit that we could hardly quibble with the other four, except perhaps for some reservations about the categorical nature of number 1.

The very pithiness of a slogan can mislead, with the result, for instance, that the construction generally placed upon Moulton's second slogan ("A language is a set of habits") has tended to be an over-simplification. For there is still a fundamental correctness about the statement if we take it as meaning: "Native speaking proficiency means possessing the skills needed to handle a language with the proficiency born of habit", that is to say, as though we were not even aware of using it - with utter spontaneity. On the other hand, a slogan can be useful, provided we understand its total import, because it gives us a way of discerning and recalling the principles by which we teach.

Some Guidelines for More Effective Teaching

With our aim of developing communicative competence in mind, are there some currently valid notions that can be set down as guidelines for more effective teaching today?

We will recognise from a perusal of the following slogans that there is really nothing new under the sun, so that some of the slogans are simply restatements of old truths; the important thing is the shift of emphasis that they represent.

1 The learner is an active participant in the learning process.

2 Provide the learner with a rich language environment.

3 Language is more than structures.

4 The teacher must monitor for individual inadequacies of reception and production.

5 An error is not a crime.

6 Aim to practise every language item in all four skills.

7 Give frequent experience of success.

Number 6, and to a lesser extent also numbers 2 and 3, will furnish the principal basis for the twelve strategies enumerated later in this article.

Let us consider each of these slogans more closely.

1 The learner is an active participant in the learning process

This slogan has important implications both for cognition and for motivation. Some writers (1971 Smith) have emphasised anew, in recent years, the importance of sustaining the learner's motivation. There hardly seems to be any need to elaborate upon this aspect here.

The excesses of manipulation mania tended to make many teachers see the learner as some kind of machine. Subjecting learners to long periods of purely mechanical pattern practice is worse than useless, leads to boredom and stifles motivation. Small amounts of pattern practice of a type that demands a [illegible] level of cognitive involvement may, of course, be valuable for "crystallising" presentation, and as a preliminary to the use of the language in a meaningful context of communication.

With the swing away from mechanistic techniques and towards greater mentalism, it is widely recognised that not only should the learner's cognitive processes be at work during the presentation and drilling of a pattern, but he should also be led to see the new language as an efficient tool for communicating his needs and opinions, outside of the formal practising of speech patterns.

2 Provide the learner with a rich language environment

While too much should not be made of any apparent correspondences between the mental processes involved in first and in second language learning, it does seem that the teacher of a second language should bear in mind one of the virtues characterising the first language situation and provide generous exposure to valid samples of the target language. It seems, too, that in a

second language situation the learner's manner of dealing with these samples, of "processing" them, is to set up tentative hypotheses about what passes for normal in that language. In the light of subsequent exposure to those same language elements in new contexts, the learner will confirm, modify or destroy these hypotheses. So that what is happening along the way towards mastery of a language is that the learner is progressively dispelling the mists that surround his as yet inadequate model of it, and at the same time constructing for himself a more and more accurate notion of normalcy in that language. This collection of "notions of normalcy" is "competence", and it is an essential prerequisite without which "performance" cannot possibly develop. "Mastery" occurs when both these facilities are at full fruition, so that constant and regular exposure to valid models of the target language is of the utmost importance.

While the migrant in the Australian context has at his disposal plenty of opportunities for exposure to English, circumstances may minimise the extent of this exposure. In any case, the language environment of the classroom ought to bring a considerable degree of order to bear upon the random quality of the English the migrant may encounter outside the classroom.

One of our aims should be for the learner to develop as soon as possible a range of recognition language that will enable him to make effective use of his new language as he meets a variety of situations. We should therefore be constantly providing opportunities to convert language items recognised into language items that can be used.

The techniques to be employed in doing this are many and varied, and later in this article the reader's attention will be drawn to a number of strategies which, collectively, will be useful for fairly advanced students, using reading as a central core.

3 Language is more than structures

Perhaps the partial demise of the content word has come about largely as a reaction against the typical course books of the grammar-translation era, in which the business of "learning about the language" was complemented by impressive but impossibly long lists of content words. Vocabulary knowledge, however, is essential if we are to fill the slots and communicate our needs. Recall of the required sentence pattern is somewhat futile if le mot juste is not available for immediate recall and use. (1971 Smith 41.)

But there is more to this slogan than its implication for the teaching of vocabulary. It is tied up, also, with the validity of the segments of language to which our learners are to be exposed. The typical unit of work in a structurally-based course is the sentence (understandably) for the purpose of presenting and drilling structures one at a time. But what of paragraph units? What of sustained reading ability, through pages and whole chapters, or columns of newspapers?

In addition to that, there are the affective aspects of discourse, including the sociocultural aspects. While not assuming that these can be taught before the basics, expressions like, "And by the way . . ." "I was meaning to tell you", "You don't mean . . .?" "And another thing", "And what's more, . . ." together with some of the subtleties conveyed by intonational ranges and the nuances of varying registers - all these need to be a part of the "valid model" to which the learner is exposed.

4 <u>The teacher must monitor for individual inadequacies of reception and production</u>

This slogan may appear at first sight to reflect no more than the normal role of the conscientious teacher. In this particular field, however, there are certain areas of sensitivity that the teacher needs to foster in himself or herself. This requires "looking inwards" as well as "looking outwards". First, a sensitivity to and an awareness of the general difficulties faced by the learner of another language. Perhaps in this respect the best equipped teacher is one who has personally passed through that experience. Second, an awareness of likely particular difficulties caused either by interference from the learner's first language or by confusion resulting from his still forming model of the target language.

To achieve these ends, a teacher must control not only the temptation to explain in terms that are meaningless to his students, but also the habit of thinking aloud in uncontrolled language that the learner will not follow. The writer recalls hearing the teacher of a very elementary class say to them, "Oh, and that takes me back to what I was talking about a moment ago!" Having become inured to this unconscious contempt for their limited range of understanding, the students did not even register their incomprehension.

The teacher also needs a deep knowledge of the subtleties and the richness of the target language, and must have the measure of the competence of his students in this respect. In a particular class where the verb "run" had presumably already been learnt in its primary sense, a teacher was talking about the symptoms we notice when we have a cold. "You know," he said, "You feel hot, and your nose runs." On the part of the teacher there was a total insensitivity to the novelty of the word "runs" used in this sense. It certainly deserved a comment (which it did not get) and was probably worth writing on the blackboard.

The other kind of sensitivity a teacher needs to develop is an "outward-looking" sensitivity, so that not only must he listen critically to himself: he must also listen critically at all times to his students. When drilling "It's a book," etc, for instance, it is not acceptable for students to drop the "t" of "it's"; and the teacher should discern and correct the fault, or it will be the beginnings of a faulty pronunciation habit.

If there is any one pedagogical talent greater than the talent for discerning imperfect comprehension, it is the talent for having at one's ready disposal an armoury of alternative education techniques. Different people learn in different ways, and some will be slow to understand at times. The effective teacher spots the problem and tries other strategies, which should include miming, use of the blackboard for visual support, and paraphrase in known terms, in order to get the meaning across.

5 An error is not a crime

While the learner's "notions of normalcy" or "model" are still taking shape, he makes errors which are not brought about exclusively by interference from his first language, but are often simply manifestations of his own imperfect model of the target language (1974 Richards). The notion of "mastery before progression", as indicated above, is typical of many audiolingual strategies, and is one the teacher might do well to dilute a little in some circumstances. It may be advisable sometimes simply to note errors in passing and come back to these later rather than to destroy the whole impetus of a lesson by drawing attention to some error of minor importance.

Again, the error may be the result of the learner endeavouring to transfer to his "active" repertoire material which hitherto has been part of his

"recognition" resources. If so, praise should be given even while the error is being corrected.

6 Aim to practise every language item in all four skills

This may not always be a completely attainable goal. Nevertheless it is a desirable one to have in view, and is the most important of the slogans. It will later be developed in some detail, and ways will be suggested in which this aim can come somewhere near accomplishment through the use of twelve strategies with reading material as the core.

It has been pointed out that:

> "the more numerous kinds of association that are made to an item, the better are learning and retention." (1966 Carroll 104)

So that, in addition to affording simply an extra exposure to an item of language, the practice of involving the learner with it through sensory modalities and contexts other than the original ones will provide different kinds of experience with that item, and this will be of great value. Thus, the hearing of a sentence like "You'd better arrive on time!" will be suitably reinforced by its subsequent exposure in a reading context. And if the link can be forged by having teacher (or tape) say the expression while the student's eye is trained upon its graphic representation, so much the better. If additionally this sentence (or a variant of it) is made to occur in a dictation, in pattern practice, in written completion exercises, and again in a real communication situation (where the learner is instructed: "Tell him not to be late" - Response: "You'd better arrive on time") - then surely little has been left to chance. Again, arrangements should be made to re-cycle the expression for both recognition and production within a fairly short time.

7 Give frequent experience of success

This one speaks for itself, and is a very sound educational precept in all situations. For the learner, there is nothing more soul-destroying than repeated failure; nothing more encouraging than a tiny taste of success. However small this taste, we ought to know the standards of our students and

consciously try to set up the lesson so that each will go away feeling that he has moved forward just a little. Sustained motivation is an essential ingredient of good teaching. Success snowballs.

Skills Integration with Reading Materials as the Pivot

Slogan 2 mentioned the importance of constantly exposing the learner to rich and valid models of the target language. Perhaps the word "encounter" is to be preferred to the more usual word "exposure" because "exposure" suggests a passivity on the part of the learner that would be inappropriate in this context. Now, the advantage of using reading as the vehicle for this encounter is that reading can provide for all registers, for the affective use of language (in combination with tape-or-teacher aural support) for intonational subtleties that do not lend themselves very well either to explanation or to drilling. Reading also has the great advantage (as opposed to a listening experience) that its language is permanent, not evanescent like the spoken word: it is a permanent record. It provides the learner with tangible evidence of his progress and a substantial prop for revision.

The principal virtue of the reading encounter, however, is that it lends itself to the extending of linguistic horizons not only in terms of quality but in terms of quantity. This applies especially to vocabulary and to that apparently forgotten phenomenon, idiom. Into what structural unit, for example, would we fit an expression like "What the devil . . .!"? And yet it is valid, it is a part of the language. On a television program recently, a wife told her husband to "go and scratch" - does this structurally belong (if we think it is of high enough frequency to justify its being taught) with "Go and shut the door"? No, of course not: it has an affective connotation, is not meant to be taken literally, and can usefully be presented to the foreign learner (if it is to have a better than average chance of being recorded and perhaps retained for recognition - and who knows, perhaps for use!) through the medium of the reading experience. (1971 Smith 63)

It is proposed, later in this article, to examine ways in which many of the slogans outlined above might be put into practice, with a Reading Encounter as the central core, or "pivot", of a wide variety of receptive and productive work. From such a point, the learner would eventually spend less

time manipulating structural units and more time on what might be termed "language in action", with a reading experience as the central core of each module of work.

First, however, there is the question of when students are ready for such techniques.

An analogy might usefully be drawn between learning to use another language and learning to swim. In learning to swim, as soon as any initial apprehensiveness is overcome, we establish rudimentary arm and leg movements, and rudimentary habits of breathing; but these skills, from an early point in their development, no longer receive exclusively separate practice towards their perfection: they are very soon put together and their practice in co-ordination quickly becomes the prime concern. Similarly, once the language learner has made a beginning with all of the fundamental skills, the task ahead consists not only of their individual consolidation but also (and primarily) of their co-ordination into as many skills combinations as may be demanded by contexts of communication. For instance, the proper response to receiving a telephone call (a listening experience) may be to write a message on a pad or to pass on the message verbally. Links need to be forged, quite early, between the skills of reception and the skills of production. (1971 Chastain 161)

It is a common experience for language-learners to recognise that, after a certain number of hours of acquaintance with the new language - the actual time taken is subject to a number of variables - there comes a point at which the learner has reached a plateau. Striking out from this eminence built upon small amounts of success, the learner is ready for greater achievement. His learning strategies are becoming refined, and his growing powers of inferencing will now increasingly enable him to penetrate the mists that formerly surrounded his model of normalcy in the new language. To continue to nourish the learner exclusively upon closely controlled language after this point is to ignore his growing readiness to pit his linguistic resilience against larger challenges, and excessive control exerted upon the language encourages a spoonfeeding mentality in students.

What is suggested here, therefore, is the use - after that platform has been arrived at - of a range of skills activities with reading material as the core. It is emphasised that, while some of these activities will already

have been initiated earlier, this total range of skills integration should not be undertaken before all four skills have become fairly well established. In particular, the learner's sound-symbol associations should be fairly firmly established already. The role of the Reading Pivot is to consolidate and integrate those basic skills. If the learner's inferencing powers are exploited with reading core materials of appropriate interest and of appropriate difficulty level, we can increase his capacity for deriving the meaning of language items that have not previously been presented or drilled; and in fact items that have never yet come within the ambit of his productive repertoire can in this way be gradually added to it in a meaningful context.

There will be a continuing need, of course, for new structural items to be presented clearly and unambiguously, and for appropriate formal practice to be provided. The absence from this article of any detailed discussion of techniques of presentation and drilling is not meant to imply that these matters lack importance. However, they are not relevant to the present discussion.

The teacher will need to evaluate materials for reading encounters in terms of interest and difficulty levels. The structural content of a suitable piece will in general stay within the confines of what is familiar, although there is no reason why an advanced class might not derive its first experience of a new structural form from several examples of it encountered in reading. Excessively strong infusions of new vocabulary are to be avoided, but the material ought not to be devoid of challenge to the learner's powers of inferencing.

Twelve Suggested Strategies for Skills Integration

Provided that the difficulty level of the core reading piece is appropriate the advantages of using these strategies will be as follows:

- Through having experienced a modicum of success in all aspects of communication in the new language, students will find their motivation is sustained for future effort and application to the task.
- With the same "tract" of structures and vocabulary comprising the reading core, each of the skills will be practised in at least one way,

and in combination with other skills (eg, listen and speak, listen and read, listen and write, read and speak, read and write, etc) so that full integration will occur; each skill helps the others.

- A considerable degree of long-term retention is likely. For the teacher who uses the twelve strategies, the following advice is offered:

  - The type of activity should be varied as much as possible. Too often students are made to listen and/or speak for excessively long periods. Some form of written activity, in addition to providing valuable literacy reinforcement to the aural/oral forms, provides a welcome relief to the student after twenty minutes or so.

  - Depending upon the stage of advancement of the class, upon the length, suitability and degree of interest generated by a particular reading encounter, considerably more than three hours of work may be extracted from a reading piece consisting of only four or five pages of text, if perhaps only a total of thirty minutes of that time is given to appropriate pattern practice deriving from structures in the passage that seem to be in need of that kind of attention.

  - It need hardly be said that, once students are ready for these techniques, the time-honoured sequence of listen, speak, read and write should no longer be regarded as sacrosanct.

  - The sequence of strategies outlined below is not intended to be arbitrary, although some obviously lend themselves to an earlier or a later position. In order to derive the maximum skills integration from the reading encounter, all or most of the strategies should be used.

    The strategies can, of course, be interspersed with more formal teaching (that is, of new structures, or of separate word study, etc) rather than all be treated at one sitting. In fact, time for remembering could be useful, especially between some of the components (especially between dictation, immediate recall exercise, oral self-expression and written self-expression).

- Nor should a fixed sequence become established, since predictable teaching can be dull teaching.

- Small, short informal tests of retention may be advisable, if only to provide the learner with milestones of success. For instance, the teacher may have students memorise short sections of a text after they have become totally familiar with it. This type of exercise will invariably leave behind some worthwhile traces, even if they are only odd phrases that will come in handy.

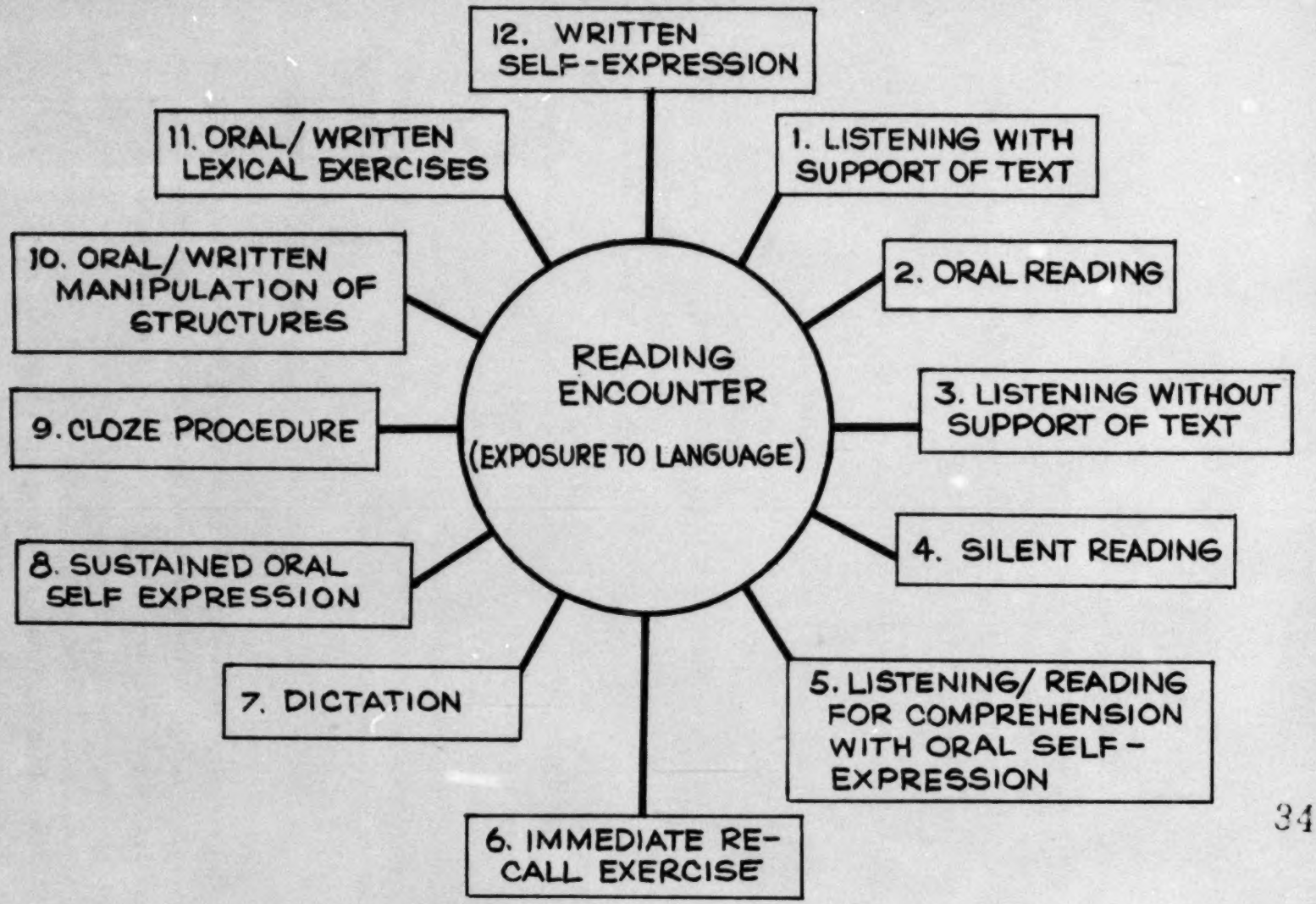
- It needs to be made clear that it would be inaccurate to label these strategies as "a reading approach", since that term suggests that the reading aim is paramount and an end in itself. While it is agreed that reading has the advantage of opening up language horizons not otherwise available in aural/oral lessons, we may need to remember that here we are exploiting the reading encounter first and foremost as a vehicle, as a starting-point towards the integration and the fuller development of all the skills. This is illustrated by the diagram on page 29.

Strategy 1 - Listening, with support of text

The teacher's pace of reading is critical. New lexical or idiomatic items should receive attention, and comprehension should be checked, perhaps in a quick objective test.

Strategy 2 - Oral reading

This activity has value in forging sound and symbol associations in the learners' minds. Students read in chorus, phrase by phrase, after the teacher's model. Teacher listens carefully for inaccuracies of pronunciation, intonation, taking care that his own intonation is appropriate. Warning: no more than a few minutes of this at a time! It is important that the teacher should be competent in the careful control of his or her own intonation in a natural way, and also in obtaining crisp, well-timed responses. It may also be felt desirable to "conduct" the students' repetition of the teacher's model with appropriate gestures. With blackboard material a crisp start can be obtained by "pointing up" the text with one hand and "calling in" with the other.


12. WRITTEN SELF-EXPRESSION
11. ORAL/WRITTEN LEXICAL EXERCISES
1. LISTENING WITH SUPPORT OF TEXT
10. ORAL/WRITTEN MANIPULATION OF STRUCTURES
2. ORAL READING
READING ENCOUNTER
(EXPOSURE TO LANGUAGE)
9. CLOZE PROCEDURE
3. LISTENING WITHOUT SUPPORT OF TEXT
8. SUSTAINED ORAL SELF EXPRESSION
4. SILENT READING
7. DICTATION
5. LISTENING/READING FOR COMPREHENSION WITH ORAL SELF-EXPRESSION
6. IMMEDIATE RE-CALL EXERCISE

AN APPROACH TO SKILLS INTEGRATION

Strategy 3 - Listening, without support of text

This is appropriate (if the core passage is easy enough) where some headway has been made with the early paragraphs and a subsequent paragraph or two are read by the teacher with students' books closed - that is, before they have been exposed to that part of the text. Alternatively, the teacher may devise a carefully controlled passage based upon, or extending, the general theme of the passage studied, after the whole passage has been exposed in other ways. Appropriate checking of comprehension can be carried out, often linked with oral self-expression: in such a situation, of course, revealing one's comprehension may be impeded by inadequacies of self-expression, and this is where the teacher's monitorial and helping role is most important.

Strategy 4 - Silent Reading

Developing the facility for sustained reading comprehension is important. Longer and longer tracts for reading need not necessarily imply the need for more and more comprehension questions! Information-getting, in particular, often requires that several paragraphs at a time may be traversed in which none of the desired information is to be found. This is a kind of resilience that should be fostered (1971 Chastain 182, 1971 Jakobovits 24). Furthermore, it is worth noting that excessive checking of comprehension can spoil the enjoyment of reading.

Strategy 5 - Listening or Reading for Comprehension
with Oral Self-Expression

As with all material intended to give rise to self-expression, the teacher needs to exert some preliminary "predictive" control over likely responses; to so design the questions that students' responses will be very largely in terms of their known repertoire.

Comprehension questions based on something heard or read are necessary as a check, but also can be used as a spring-board to self-expression. After specific questions on the text have given the learner some reassurance that he has understood it and can speak about it, more general questions on the same theme can be tried. (See Strategy 8)

Strategy 6 - Immediate Recall Exercise

The passage should be short (five or six lines of text), interesting, and

either directly taken from the material studied or a reconstruction incorporating similar material, all of which is familiar. The piece is written on the blackboard, books are closed, and the teacher may use single and double vertical bars to mark out the sense and sentence divisions, possibly also using slanted stress marks over the stressed syllables. The teacher reads out the passage carefully and fairly slowly but naturally. Then several choral and individual readings aloud are taken, the teacher gradually removing the extent to which his reading provides a model and progressively erasing words from the blackboard, beginning with the most easily recalled and leaving the likely most difficult words till last so that these will receive the maximum exposure and practice time. Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation all receive attention and the learner passes from scepticism about his power of retention to the stage at which (temporarily, at least) he has committed all three or four sentences to memory. Confidence will be built if some individual performances are interspersed with the choral ones. The oral part of this exercise may conveniently be followed by a dictation (possibly after some time has elapsed) of the same or a similar piece. Instead, or as well, students may be asked to reproduce the passage from memory in writing.

Strategy 7 - Dictation

At virtually all stages of the learning process dictation is a valuable exercise in "matching". The student hears a phrase. In his mind he must match what he thought he heard against his notions of correctness, then check its appropriateness in this context.

The contextual field of the dictation is a large one, and for this "matching" purpose contains several influencing factors, viz:

a) the theme of the dictation, as the student perceives and confirms it to be;

b) the register (colloquial, literary, etc);

c) the part of the dictation that he has processed and written up to this point; and

d) the part of the dictation that is yet to come, in terms of (a) and (b) above and as he sees it from

i) what he recalls of the first reading and from

ii) his predictions about what it is likely to be.

The learner's mind is very active during a dictation, and the more accurate his inferencing and predicting, the greater will be the satisfaction he derives.

In the early stages of a course, where dictation should make its first appearance, there is only a limited structural and lexical repertoire to range over, so that the student can focus his concentration largely upon the matching of letter and sound associations.

The material used for a dictation should be familiar. The passage may be taken intact from a section of the reading encounter, or it may subsume various familiar elements from this and earlier work in a "re-write" by the teacher. So that an appropriate procedure may be followed, a dictation may consist of anything from three or four connected sentences up to about 100 words.

A suggested procedure is:

a) Write the title on the blackboard and read the passage through at slightly slower than normal speed.

b) Dictate the passage giving the punctuation and reading each sense group once (or twice, if preferred); if twice, you may combine this with a form of Strategy 2 (Oral Reading) so that the students chorus the phrase after your first reading of it and before they hear its second reading. Then they write it down. Move around during (b), giving hints and help as necessary.

c) Allow time for students to check their work.

d) Read the passage a third time and allow a few minutes for final checking of the whole passage..

e) Immediate correction from a flap-board, overhead transparency, or correction cards.

Strategy 8 - Sustained Oral Self-Expression

While the main purpose of this strategy will be to demonstrate comprehension of what has been read or heard, its most valuable aspect will be an extended thematic discussion. A reading passage about the role of the tramways in Australian cities in a bygone era, for instance, may contain the statement that "the tram-drivers seem to have been a contented lot, since there was no record of their ever having gone on strike". Once a specific question has clarified the concept of "strike", and students have devised an information-giving answer, a suitable prompt to self-expression may be provided by a thematic question like "Are strikes ever justified - why?"

Spontaneity is an ally of self-expression, and where a controversial issue comes up, the intermediate-to-advanced student will have something he wants to say and needs to say.

Quite aside from questions based on a reading encounter, a cluster of structures from the learner's known repertoire can sometimes be organised in such a way by the teacher that the teacher's questions elicit a wide range of self-expression on a given topic. This is most important as a means of putting formally-practised patterns to work as a tool of real communication.

Not forgetting the importance of having the learner formulate questions as well as answers, we might at times deliver to the class an instruction containing an indirect question so that one student (the questioner) frames the direct question and puts it to his partner, who formulates an answer. The teacher then runs a survey of (a) how the question was put and (b) what the answer was. For example:

> Teacher: A ask B where they found the money that had been stolen from the bank?
>
> A (in each pair, to his partner): Where did they find the stolen money?
>
> B (in each pair, to his partner): Under an old tree in the park. (Teacher then checks, eg "Group 4 - what did you ask your partner? What was the question?" etc.)

Strategy 9 - Cloze procedure

This will afford another form of relief from listening and speaking. Leaving the first sentence intact, delete every nth word (usually the seventh, eighth or ninth) and have students replace the missing words, after reading the passage right through. To vary this, instead of supplying the missing words, students may be given a multiple-choice range at each blank, from which to select the appropriate gap-filler. Cloze bears some relationship to dictation in terms of its valuable "matching" processes. The material for it may come from a "well-worn" part of the Reading Encounter, or else from an unseen section of it, or from a re-write using familiar material.

Strategy 10 - Oral or Written Manipulation of Structures

This is a large topic, and it would be quite inappropriate to attempt any detailed treatment of it here. However, one thing needs to be said. There is value in having students write controlled manipulation exercises after an appropriate amount of oral practice of the same sort, not only for the relief from listening and speaking that it affords, but also because writing may help to "fix" what they have performed at the oral level. Writing can also furnish them with tangible evidence of manipulatory skill, and forces them to come to grips accurately with the written forms of the language.

Strategy 11 - Oral or written lexical exercises

Lexis has tended to be neglected in the age of the structure. Word study, vocabulary recall, "opposites", the matching of words with definitions, etc, all help to develop language finesse. Often, it can take the form of a game, of which a great many are available. Just a few examples will suffice. Eg: Give three names of fruit that begin with "p"; or match the words that belong together in two columns; for instance,

hat	leg
arm	coat
sideboard	towel
facewasher	ticket
train	chair
	steel

Another useful lexical exercise consists of writing four columns on the board with gaps to be filled:

Noun	Adjective	Verb	Adverb
advice	?	?	?
?	full	?	?
?	?	to sleep	?
?	?	?	justly
a change	?	?	?

In addition, the learner's power of lexical expression can be strengthened through attention to prefixes (trans-; inter-) and suffixes (-less; -able), including those indicating oppositeness, etc (un-; a-; im-; dis-).

After all, if most of our teaching continues to see the sentence (and, let us hope, the larger entities as well) as the unit of instruction, there is little harm that can result if we occasionally give the single word a status in its own right.

Strategy 12 - Written Self-Expression

When he tries to express himself, the foreign learner often fails to recognise his limitations and steps outside the zone of competence in the new language, with the result that interference from habits of his first language will tend to occur. While linguistic interference is likely to be the bête noire of all self-expression, whether oral or written, it is all the more important to minimise error-making in writing because making a large number of errors somehow seems more serious when the errors are committed to paper and not simply to the air waves.

The destructive role of interference and of misconceptions about the target language can be minimised if appropriate constraints are placed upon any exercise in which the foreign learner is expected to express himself by writing English. The teacher can provide various types of framework within which the student will enjoy considerable freedom while still remaining inside the boundaries of his performance range. One suitable technique,

where a simple narrative of events (or narrative with dialogue) is to be written, is for the teacher to devise a carefully constructed batch of sequential questions in order to exert some degree of control over the structural responses they are likely to elicit. So far as lexis and idiom are concerned, it may be as well to allow complete freedom (although the learner will tend, of course, to use "false friends") so that the learner is encouraged to demonstrate the richness of his repertoire in these respects. The student first writes separate answers to this sequence of questions then rewrites them, using suitable linking devices, to produce a paragraph or several paragraphs as required. Rewriting has the added advantage that it allows opportunities to check, discern and correct errors or infelicitous turns of expression. While full sentence answers at the oral level would be unnatural, the teacher should emphasise their necessity here, at the written level. The subject matter of a written self-expression exercise would of course turn upon matter that has been encountered, used and practised in other ways, in the initial reading material. It will best represent, in the early stages especially, a crystallisation of expression that has alreadv taken place at the oral level.

Conclusion

To summarise, we need to recognise the value of reading beyond strict language control, once all the skills have begun to develop and some top priority structures and vocabulary have been taught, as a sound means of widening the learner's language horizons and as a suitable pivot for the integration and continuing practice of the four fundamental skills.

It will be found that this welding of all the skills, and the increased number of associations thereby provided to the structures and vocabulary practised, will lead to the beginnings of true communicative competence.

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TWO FORMS OF STIMULUS TO SELF-EXPRESSION: THE USE OF ACTION PICTURES AND THE EXCURSION

* Mrs E.A. Liew

To show students how much English they can use, draw "action pictures". Start with a simple picture which prompts students to reproduce sentences they have learnt. Gradually add more to the picture with the students responding after each addition. Miming actions also helps, eg:

After Unit 17 of Situational English for Newcomers to Australia:

1 Draw a woman (stick figure)
Students contribute -

This is Betty Smart. She's here.
Betty is Australian.
She's tall and she's fair.
She's single, she isn't married.

2 Draw a big sun and mime being hot and thirsty.
Students contribute -

She's hot and tired.
She's thirsty. She isn't very happy.

3 Draw Kurt running.
Students contribute -

That's Kurt Schmidt. He's there.
He's German, he isn't Australian.
He's running, he's late.
He's a young man.

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4 Rub out Kurt running and draw him next to Betty. Kurt has a bag with drinks in it.

Teacher - Kurt is speaking to Betty.

Students contribute -

Kurt : Hello Betty. How are you?

Betty: Hello Kurt. I'm tired and I'm hot. I want a drink.

Kurt : I'm thirsty too, Betty. Here is my bag.
This is lemonade. This is coke.

Betty: Give me one please, Kurt.

Kurt : Take one Betty. Here you are.

Betty: Thank you.

5 Draw a book in the bag.

Betty: What's this, Kurt?

Kurt : That's my English book.

Betty: Show me your English book, please.

Kurt : Here you are.

Betty: What's your teacher's name?

Kurt : Her name is Mrs .....

6 Draw a clock.

Betty: What's the time please Kurt?

Kurt : It's half past three.

Betty: Oh, I'm late, Kurt. Goodbye.

Kurt : Goodbye, Betty.

Students also enjoy "action pictures" with unexpected endings. For example:

A Gradually draw a picture of a man digging in a garden, his house in the background, his wife looking at him, his neighbour over the fence. The wife is holding a hose with her back to the neighbour. Finally draw the water from the hose wetting the neighbour.

B Man in an armchair sleeping, snoring. Child watching. Light hanging from the ceiling. Spider hanging from the light. Man's mouth is open, spider drops in.

When going on excursions with students in larger groups, the teacher might give students a list of questions using words which may be of use to them later when discussing their trips. An example follows.

A Trip to the Museum

1 Are there any interesting things in the museum?

2 Is there a coin collection?
Where do the coins come from?
How old are they?

3 Are there any Tasmanian animals?
How big is a wombat?
Is an echidna soft?

4 The paintings of early Hobart are interesting, aren't they?

5 Do you like the ships?

6 There is a good view from the windows of the ship room.
What can you see?

On excursions to Richmond, the students enjoy following a sketch map and answering questions.

On excursions with small groups, the students can ask questions prepared earlier. This gives them confidence to ask more questions thought out on the spot. For instance:

Prepared questions for a visit to the Town Hall

1 How old is this building?
2 Who is the Lord Mayor?
3 Can we see the Lady Mayoress' room?
4 Where do they give babies DPT injections?
5 Are there any women on the Council?
6 When does the Council meet?
7 Can we come to Council meetings?
8 My neighbour has five noisy dogs. What can I do?
9 How much is a dog licence?
10 How many people work for the Council?
11 Where must we pay parking fines?
12 Can we buy rat poison at the Town Hall?